



AN AUTHENTIC
" A C C O U N T

701
2743

OF THE

P A R T

TAKEN BY THE LATE

EARL OF CHATHAM

IN A

T R A N S A C T I O N

Which passed in the Beginning of the Year 1778.



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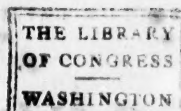
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AN AUTHENTIC
A C C O U N T, &c.

[N. B. The letters (a) (b), &c. refer to the same letters in the APPENDIX which is subjoined to this account.]

VARIOUS false reports having been industriously propagated, concerning a negociation, (if it may be so called) said to have been carried on between the Earl of Bute and the late Earl of Chatham, it has been thought indispensibly necessary to draw up a distinct and authentic account, from papers now in possession of the Earl of Chatham's family, of what did pass relative to that affair, that it may appear, whether the transaction did, or did not, originate from Lord Chatham; and that it may be clearly ascertained, what were his sentiments and disposition with regard to it.

It appears, (a) that various conversation had passed between Sir James Wright and Dr. Addington, relative to Lord Bute and Lord Chatham, previous to the third of February, 1778; but that Lord Chatham was in no wise apprised of this, till the above-mentioned day, on which Dr. Addington went to Hayes, and read to Lord Chatham the following extract of a letter, which the Doctor informed him, he had that morning received from Sir James Wright:

No. I.—*Extract of a letter from Sir James Wright to Dr. Addington.*

“ As I immediately, on my return from Lord Bute's, took down in short hand the principal heads of it, I think I shall not deviate materially from the very words of the conversation, at least if the spirit of his Lordship's language is debilitated, the essential matter of it is the same.
“ I told Lord Bute, that a friend of mine, whose honour and sincerity I could rely upon, had hinted to me (* that he thought Lord Chatham had

* The truth of this part is expressly denied by Dr. Addington in his *Narrative*, in which the Doctor declares, that to the best of his remembrance, Lord Chatham had never once named Lord Bute to him. (b) (b)

“ a high opinion of his Lordship's honour, as well as his sincere good wishes
 “ for the public safety). He enquired who my friend was? I told him it
 “ was you. He replied, I know he is much Lord Chatham's friend; I
 “ know also, that he is an honest man, and a man of sense. I related to him
 “ the conversation that had passed between yourself and me, at our last meet-
 “ ing. He said, Lord Chatham was one of the very few he had ever acted
 “ with in Administration, who had shewn great honesty and generosity of
 “ sentiment, with a sincere conduct, and intention for the King's and the
 “ public welfare.

“ That as for himself, he said, he had no connection with any one in Ad-
 “ ministration; that he had not the least distant friendship with Lord North,
 “ or he should certainly advise him, by all means, to aim at gaining Lord
 “ Chatham over to the King's service and confidence; and, said he, you
 “ may tell your friend, Dr. Addington, to assure Lord Chatham, that if he
 “ should think proper to take an active part in Administration, he shall have
 “ my most hearty concurrence, and sincere good wishes; and you have my
 “ full leave to communicate all my sentiments on this subject to your friend.
 “ He continued saying many very respectful things of Lord Chatham, adding,
 “ had we not unfortunately disagreed about the last peace, I am sure he and
 “ I should have continued such steady friends, that this country never would
 “ have experienced her present severe misfortunes. He also said, the prior
 “ part of Lord Chatham's last speech, was manly and constitutional, and
 “ could not but induce every one, a well-wisher to his country, to wish to
 “ see him again take a part in the government of the King's affairs, which
 “ would be a happiness for the whole empire. He continued saying, perhaps
 “ we have men of abilities in the House of Lords, but those in Administration
 “ (except Lord Suffolk, who is usually ill half the year) are none of them
 “ sufficiently serious, or attentive enough to the business of the nation, which
 “ is now of so much consequence, as not to be neglected in the least degree.
 “ He therefore could not say he had a good opinion of their conduct. He
 “ also said, in the course of the conversation, that nothing but the most im-
 “ minent danger to this country, should induce him to take a part in the
 “ Government of it, unless in conjunction with an upright and able Admi-
 “ nistration.

“ Much more was said, but of less moment; however, all tended to con-
 “ vince me, that there are not two other men in the kingdom more faithfully
 “ inclined to the good and safety of our present distracted nation, than our
 “ two noble friends.”

[This letter was dated January 2, it should have been February 2, hav-
 ing been received by Dr. Addington on February 3.]

Lord Chatham dictated the following message in answer, which was taken
 down in writing by Dr. Addington, a copy of which was delivered by him
 to Sir James Wright:

No. II.—*Copy of a note given by Doctor Addington to Sir James Wright.*

" Lord Chatham heard with particular satisfaction, the favourable sentiments
" on his subject of the noble Lord, with whom you had talked with regard
" to the impending ruin of the kingdom. He fears all hope is precluded,
" but adds, that zeal, duty, and obedience, may outlive hope; that if any
" thing can prevent the consummation of public ruin, it can only be *new*
" *Counsels*, and *new Counsellors*, without farther loss of time; a *real change*
" from a sincere conviction of past errors, and not a mere palliation, which
" must prove fruitless."

It appears from Dr. Addington's Narrative, (c) that the Doctor then proceeded to inform Lord Chatham of the substance of those parts of the conversation which had passed between him and Sir James Wright, which are not recited in Sir James's letter of Feb. 2d, No. I.

The account of this, as well as what passed at that time, in conversation between Lord Chatham and Dr. Addington, and particularly Lord Chatham's declaration, " that it was impossible for him to serve the King and
" Country with either Lord Bute or Lord North" is contained in Dr. Addington's Narrative. (c)

On the 7th of February, Dr. Addington sent the following letter to Hayes:

No. III.—*Copy of a letter from Dr. Addington, to the Earl of Chatham, dated Wigmore-street, Saturday two o'clock.*

" My good Lord,
" Sir James Wright took a correct copy of the valuable writing entrusted
" to my care, between twelve and one yesterday. At one he waited on his
" friend, and I was to call in Brook-street for his answer at half past two. I
" was punctual to the time; Sir James had been at home, but a few minutes
" before my arrival had been called back to his friend. I waited half an
" hour, and then left a letter, requesting the favour of a line from Sir James,
" before he went out of town. At five, I received a short note, saying that
" his stay in town could be of no service, and that he would give me an
" account by the post this day of his conversation with ——. Perhaps more per-
" sons than one were to be consulted before an account could be given. As far
" as I could learn, all parties would be pleased with your Lordship and
" Lord Camden, and that no objection was likely to be made to more than
" one of your Lordship's friends. Sir James Wright asked what was meant
" by the words " *real change*." I thought they wanted no explanation. He
" thought they included his friend, as well as the Ministry, and wished that
" your Lordship and his friend could have an interview, but gave me no
" commission to mention his wishes. He only added, that he really believed
" it

" it was in the power of your Lordship and his friend to save the nation ; I
 " only added that I believed the King and your Lordship could save the
 " nation, and that his friend might be instrumental to its salvation, by turn-
 " ing the Royal mind from past errors. I hope your Lordship and Lady
 " Chatham go on well, and that I shall have the happiness of paying my
 " respects to you both in Harley-street, on Monday. I most heartily congratu-
 " late my Lady and your Lordship on the safe arrival of Mr. James Pitt.

" I am ever, my dear and good Lord,

" your most faithful, and

" obliged humble Servant,

" A. ADDINGTON."

Wigmore-street, two o'clock, Saturday.

The same night Lord Chatham wrote with his own hand the following note, in answer to Dr. Addington, which was received by the Doctor the next morning :

No. IV.—*Copy of a note from the Earl of Chatham to Dr. Addington.*

Hayes, Feb. 7.

" The conversations which a certain gentleman has found means to have
 " with you, are on his part of a nature too insidious, and to my feelings too
 " offensive, to be continued, or *unrejoiced*. What can this officious emissary
 " mean, by all the nonsense he has at times thrown out to you? The next
 " attempt he makes to surprize friendly integrity by courtly insinuation, let
 " him know that his great patron and your village friend differ in this*, one
 " has brought the King and kingdom to ruin, the other would sincerely
 " endeavour to save it."

Dr. Addington, on the 8th of February, sent to Lord Chatham at Hayes the following letter, (enclosing one which he had received that day from Sir James Wright, soon after the receipt of the above note from Lord Chatham :)

No. V.—*Copy of a letter from Dr. Addington to the Earl of Chatham.*

" I am infinitely obliged to you, my dear Lord, for your kind and friendly
 " caution against surprize and insinuation. It shall never be forgotten, and
 " when I see the gentleman next (which perhaps may be to-morrow) your
 " Lordship's wise and noble commands shall be literally obeyed. The en-
 " closed letter, which was promised to come yesterday by the post, arrived this
 " morning, by a special messenger. It needs no comment of mine ; I am

* Sir James had told the Doctor, and the Doctor had told Lord Chatham, that Lord Chatham and Lord Bute did not differ in political sentiments, which the Doctor thinks might occasion the last sentence in Lord Chatham's note.

" sure

" sure your Lordship will understand the language and drift of it, much
 " better than I can, or any body else. I am impatient to see your Lordship
 " in town, and pray a few minutes with you to-morrow. The time is come
 " for you and you only to save a King and kingdom. Your Lordship knows
 " that I am ever

" Your most faithful, and most
 " affectionate humble Servant,

" Feb. 8, 1778.

A. ADDINGTON."

No. VI.—Copy of a letter from Sir James Wright to Dr. Addington.

Ray-House, Feb. 7, 1778.

" My dear Doctor,

" I communicated our conversation of yesterday to my friend, soon after
 " I left you, and then shewed him a copy of the paper you allowed me to
 " transcribe. You will easily recollect, on my first reading it over with you,
 " the observation I made on the particular expression in it, " A real change,
 " and not a mere palliation;" namely, that your noble friend still thought
 " that Lord Bute had influence in the measures of Administration. In the
 " very same light he also construed this expression; he therefore desired me
 " to inform you, for the instruction of your friend, that the ill health he had
 " long been subject to, united with the distresses of his family, had accus-
 " tomed him to a perfect retired life, which he hoped, as long as he lived,
 " steadily to adhere to; he added, that his long absence from all sort of
 " public business, and the many years which had intervened since he saw
 " the King, precluded him from forming any idea of measures past or to
 " come, but what he gathers from very general conversation, or the news-
 " papers; and this total ignorance, he said, renders the opinion given of the
 " present dangerous crisis more alarming to him than it would otherwise be,
 " and much more painful, as, notwithstanding his zeal for the country, love
 " for the King, and very high opinion of Lord Chatham, he has it not in
 " his power to be of the least use in this dangerous emergency; and that
 " from his heart he wished Lord Chatham every imaginable success in the
 " restoration of the public welfare.

" I think, my dear Doctor, this was almost verbatim my friend's con-
 " versation; at least I am confident it is a fac-simile of his real sentiments;
 " and you see how very distant they are from the least inclination ever to in-
 " terfere in the present or any future Administration, which your noble friend
 " seemed to apprehend. May he extend the powers of his own great and
 " honest abilities, to heal the dreadful wounds, which this poor country has
 " received from what he very wisely calls *past errors*. Without his head, as
 " well as heart, I fear all is lost. I remember poor Lord Northington saying
 " to me more than once, not long before his death, that " as I was a young
 " man, I should probably live to see (if I survived Lord Chatham and a few
 " other

" other great men) that this country would not only want abilities but hearts, and that our state would then be really piteous, where both knowledge and integrity were wanting to protect us." Pray God your noble friend may step forth before this sorrowful epocha arrives, and stem the dreadful tide of profligacy, inattention to business, and barefaced immorality, which daily encrease in every department of life, and must bring down ruin, and the dissolution of our country.

" That first quality of *knowledge*, which Lord Northington lamented the extinction of in this country, I shall never presume to be entitled to; but that of integrity I dare assert my claim to; and in that particular I hold myself inferior to no man: I only wish it was in my power to give your great and invaluable friend the most convincing proofs of this assertion, as well as of my profound veneration for him. You have known me long enough to be persuaded that nothing can divert me from the love of my country, and the paths of an honest conduct; therefore ever command, with the utmost freedom, my dear Doctor,

" Your most faithful and sincere friend,

" JAMES WRIGHT.

" P. S. I shall be in town on Tuesday about three o'clock, and stay till the following day."

The next day the following answer, written by the Countess of Chatham, was sent to Dr. Addington:

No. VII.—*Copy of a letter from Lady Chatham to Dr. Addington, dated Feb. 9.*

" I write, my dear Sir, from my Lord's bed-side, who has had much pain all last night from gout in his left hand and wrist. The pulse indicates more pain to come. He desires me to express for him the true sense he has of all your very friendly attention in this very delicate and critical situation. The gentleman's letter which you transmit is handsomely written, and sufficiently explicit. At the same time, it is impossible not to remark, how widely it differs from the tenor of some of the intimations conveyed in former strange conversations to you. The letter now before him is written also with much good sense and candour, as coming from a heart touched with the extreme dangers impending over the King and Kingdom. Those dangers are indeed extreme, and seem to preclude all hope.

" *Hayes, quarter before one, Feb. 9, 1778.*"

From this unambiguous and authentic account, founded upon indisputable evidence, every impartial person will determine whether the following proposition is not fully established: viz.

" That the late Earl of Chatham not only did not court a political negotiation with the Earl of Bute, but without hesitation, peremptorily rejected every idea of acting with his Lordship in Administration."

APPENDIX.

A P P E N D I X.

DR. ADDINGTON'S Narrative.

Containing his Account of what passed relative to this Transaction.

(a) **T**HE first time Sir James Wright talked with Dr. Addington respecting Lord Bute and Lord Chatham was about the beginning of January, 1778. Sir James began with lamenting the situation of this country, and gave it as his opinion, that the only method of saving it was for Lord Bute and Lord Chatham to unite firmly together, but remarking, that they were two of the men the King *bated* most. After various conversations on this matter, Sir James said Lord Bute thought Lord Chatham had a disrespect for him. Dr. Addington replied, (b) that, to the best of his remembrance, Lord Chatham had never once named Lord Bute to him, but that he thought Lord Chatham had no disrespect for Lord Bute; adding, that though they might differ in politics, Lord Chatham was not the kind of man to have disrespect, or bear ill will to any man. Sir James added, he was sure Lord Bute had the highest respect for Lord Chatham; that he had heard Lord Bute bestow great commendations on his whole speech at the beginning of the session, except that part which regarded the recall of the troops, and that the Doctor might tell Lord Chatham so if he pleased; but he never mentioned it till the 3d of February.

Nothing more passed till the 2d of February, when Sir James asked the Doctor, whether he had mentioned their former conversation to Lord Chatham. He said he had not; Sir James then said, that since that conversation he had seen Lord Bute, and was certain he had the same earnest desire with Lord Chatham to save the country; and was also certain, that nobody could save it, but Lord Chatham, with the assistance of Lord Bute: that Lord Bute was ready to assist him, and would be Secretary of State in the room of Lord Weymouth: the Doctor understood that Lord Bute had told Sir James so, and he has asked Sir James once or twice since, whether

Lord Bute would have been Secretary of State in Lord Weymouth's room? and he answered, Yes, he would, or would not, as Lord Chatham pleased. When Sir James had mentioned Lord Bute's readiness to assist Lord Chatham, and to be Secretary of State, he expressed a wish that the whole which had passed might be communicated to Lord Chatham. The Doctor on this resolved to go to Hayes the next morning for that purpose, looking upon it as a matter of very great moment. But he desired to have in writing, before he went, the substance of what had passed between Lord Bute and Sir James. Sir James said he had not time to write then, as he was in a hurry to go to Ray House, but would write in the evening, and send his letter to town by nine the next morning. The Doctor, notwithstanding, was permitted to acquaint Lord Chatham with Lord Bute's willingness to be Secretary of State, and, as he understood, with every thing else he has deposed, which is not expressed in the letter. (Vide No. I. in the preceding account.) The letter is dated the 2d of January, 1778: it should have been dated February 2d: The Doctor received it February 3d before nine in the morning, and set out directly for Hayes. He read the letter to Lord Chatham, who was very attentive, and in a few minutes afterwards dictated this answer. (Vide No. II. in the preceding account.) (c) As soon as Dr. Addington had writ and read to Lord Chatham the above answer, he communicated to Lord Chatham what Sir James Wright had told him of the readiness of Lord Bute to be Secretary of State in the place of Lord Weymouth. He seemed to think it strange. "Indeed," said he, "did Sir James Wright tell you so?" "He certainly told me so."—After this, he asked Lord Chatham, whether he had any objection to coming in with Lord Bute or Lord North? He lifted up his hands, and said, "It was impossible for him to serve the King and Country with either of them; and if any one asks you about it, I desire you to bear witness that you heard me say so." He repeated the same words just as the Doctor was leaving him.

Sir James continued at Ray House till February 5th or 6th. He called on the Doctor in the morning of the 6th, and took a correct copy of Lord Chatham's answer, dated February 3d. Upon reading it, he asked what was meant by the words, "real change." It looks, said he, as if they included Lord Bute as well as the Ministry, and as if Lord Chatham thought Lord Bute was concerned in public affairs. I can assure you, he has nothing to do with them, and has not seen the King these two years. If Lord Chatham has a mind to undertake the direction of public affairs, there will be no objection to his having the assistance of Lord Camden; but there are some he might chuse who could not be admitted. Sir James said, he was to wait on Lord Bute at one that day, and would send the Doctor an answer to Lord Chatham's paper between two and three, if Lord Bute should chuse to give any. But a misfortune happening in Lord Bute's family, no answer was sent till February 8th in the morning. On the 7th of February, a servant of Lord Chatham's came to town, by whom Dr. Addington sent a letter to

Hayes.

Hayes at two o'clock, giving Lord Chatham an account of the above-mentioned conversation with Sir James Wright on the 6th. On the evening of the 7th, his Lordship wrote the following answer, which the Doctor received the next morning. (Vide No. III. and No. IV. inserted in the preceding account.)

On the 8th of February, soon after Lord Chatham's letter arrived, the Doctor received that letter from Sir James, which had been expected from February 6th. (Vide No. VI. in the preceding account. It is dated February 7th, and contains Lord Bute's answer to Lord Chatham's paper of February 3d. The Doctor sent it immediately to Hayes, and had the next morning the following answer written by Lady Chatham, dated February 9th. (Vide No. VII. in the preceding account.) The Doctor communicated to Sir James Wright this letter from Lady Chatham, and also the latter part of that from Lord Chatham as soon as he could, and so the affair ended.

(b) P. S. In Sir James Wright's letter of February 2d, there are the following words: "I told Lord Bute that a friend of mine had hinted to me, that he thought Lord Chatham had a high opinion of his Lordship's honour, as well as his sincere good wishes for the public safety." After reading these words to Lord Chatham, the Doctor could not but take notice that Sir James had mistaken him, for all he said was, that he thought Lord Chatham had no disrespect for Lord Bute, &c. as is stated above.

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